SHRI CHITTABRATA MAJUMDAR: Sir, through you, I want to know from the hon. Minister of Power,—the Southern Region consists of Andhra Pradesh and part of Karnataka whereas Eastern Region consists of West Bengal, Sikkim, Bihar, Orissa and Jharkhand — does the geographic spread itself require bifurcation of the Eastern Region. As regards the transmission system and sub-stations, Northern Region has 20 southern Region has 23 sub-stations and the Eastern Region has 22 sub-stations. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether this should be bifurcated or not.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: Sir, in the main answer, I have already stated the parameter is like geographical spread, including the difficult terrain, size of the transmission system and number of sub-stations.

Therefore, Sir, these four ingredients are taken into account before making sub-division of the North and South regions. There is no hard and fast rule as such. We can revisit it as and when the necessity arise. Where we faced the unwieldy situation, we have divided it. In such eventuality, it can be revisited.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Pension to Freedom Fighters

*105. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a scheme for payment of pension to Freedom Fighters had been introduced at the inception of our Republic;

(b) the salient details of the scheme so introduced especially eligibility criteria, rate of pension per individual/dependents, mode of payment etc., and revision, if any, made therein till date;

(c) whether the Freedom Fighters belonging to Azad Hind Fauz (INA) were equally eligible to the pension scheme at its very inception or at subsequent stage;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the reasons for their exclusion from the Freedom Fighters' Pension facility at the inception of the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MANIKRAO GAVIT): (a) A "Freedom Fighters' Pension Scheme" was introduced in 1972. In 1980, the scheme was liberalized and renamed "Swatantrata Sainik Samman Pension Scheme, 1980".

(b) The salient details are as follows:

ELIGIBILITY

The following categories of freedom fighters are eligible for Samman Pension:

a) A person who had suffered a minimum imprisonment of 6 months in connection with the freedom struggle (3 months in case of women and SC/ST freedom fighters).

b) A person who remained underground for six months or more.

c) A person who was interned in his home or externed from his district for six months or more.

d) A person whose property was confiscated or attached and sold due to participation in the National Freedom Struggle.

e) A person who was permanently incapacitated during firing or *lathi* charge.

f) A person who lost his Government job (Central/State Government, including job in local bodies) and thus was deprived of means of livelihood for participation in the National Freedom Struggle.

g) A person who was awarded the punishment of 10 strokes of caning/ flogging/whipping.

AMOUNT OF PENSION

The amount of pension payable to freedom fighters was initially Rs. 200/- per month. After subsequent periodic enhancements, the amount was fixed at Rs. 1,500/- per month *w.e.f.* October 2, 1994. On the occasion

of the 50th Anniversary of Independence in August, 1997, the amount of pension was doubled. Besides, it was also decided to grant dearness relief linked with price increase. Presently, the amount of pension and dearness relief payable to various categories of freedom fighters and their dependents is as under:

Sl.No.	Category	Monthly Pension	Dearness Relief @ 44% (*i.e.*39%+5%) of the monthly pension with effect from August 1, 2004.
		(Rs.)	(Rs.)
1. (a)	Ex-Andaman political prisoners	4,000/-	1760/-
(b)	Freedom fighters who suffered outside British India (other than INA)	3,500/-	1540/-
2.	Other freedom fighters (including INA)	3,000/-	1320/-
3.	Widow/widower of above categories of freedom fighters	3,000/-	1320/-
4.	Unmarried & unemployed daughters		
	(a) Eldest daughter	600/-	264/-
	(b) Other two daughters	350/- each	154/- each
5.	Mother and father	1000/- each	440/- each

MODE OF PAYMENT

Under the payment procedure effective from 1.1.90, pension is disbursed to the freedom fighters through the branches of public sector nationalized banks.

(c) and (d) The freedom fighters belonging to Azad Hind Fauz (INA) were also covered by the scheme from the very inception in 1972.

(e) Does not arise.